

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)
AT THE MARITIME DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT SEMINAR**

MADLES

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Ohayo goza i masu,

JCG Director-General, Sato-san, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, it is indeed an honour and pleasure for me to address the Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Seminar (MADLES) 2009. I would, first of all, like to thank the Japan Coast Guard for hosting this event in collaboration with UNODC.

I am particularly pleased to note that, in addition to our hosts from Japan, we are fortunate to have with us – as participants – law enforcement officers from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, as well as observers from the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States.

The structure of my address¹ today will be essentially two-fold. First I will try to outline some of the drug control challenges we face here in East and SE Asia. Then I would like to speak, at some length, on what we can do – both regionally and internationally – to strengthen practical co-operation in combating drug trafficking at sea. I will try to explore how this might be achieved through the establishment of common working mechanisms and standard operating procedures.

THE SITUATION WE FACE

What follows, now, is my overview on the illicit drugs situation in our region. At present, regarding illicit opiates, the situation is – more or less – under control. However, as regards amphetamine-type stimulants (or ATS), we face a growing threat with a number of worrying new dimensions for which increased vigilance is required. Please now allow me to go into greater detail.

First, opiates. Next week on 14 December, I will be launching our latest crop monitoring survey conducted earlier this year in SE Asia. This is a body of work which we have undertaken in collaboration with the national authorities in Myanmar and Lao

¹ I would like to acknowledge the contribution to this address which has been made by many colleagues, but specifically six experts working with UNODC. The first is Mr. **Alan Cole** (UNODC Counter-Piracy Programme Co-ordinator, based in Nairobi). The second is Mr. **Pierre Lapaque**, who is the Chief of our Law Enforcement, Organized Crime and Anti Money Laundering Unit and is based in our HQ in Vienna. The third is Mr. **Ketil Ottersen** (Senior Programme Coordinator, UNODC Container Control Programme, based in Vienna) also working in the same unit. The last three are officers serving under my responsibility in our Regional Centre in Bangkok. They are Mr. **Michel Bonnieu**, our Senior Legal Adviser and Mr. **Vipon Kititasnatorchai**, our Counter Terrorism Expert and Ms. **Deepika Naruka**, our SMART Coordinator. Naturally, I assume full responsibility for the contents of the speech.

PDR. Compared with the picture in 2008, we continue to track some worrying negative trends in cultivation in Myanmar. But, overall, we will witness the continued overall **containment** of the poppy crop in those two countries. And here is the good news which is often overlooked. In stark contrast to the situation in SW Asia – centered on Afghanistan, where we are only now starting to witness some successes in crop reduction – the dramatic decline of illicit poppy cultivation in SE Asia from its peak in the early 1990s is still holding – more or less.

Many in this room will recall a time when our region accounted for over half of the world's illicit cultivation. Well today we account for only around 5% of production. This represents a major success in the field of international drug control.

Unfortunately, the picture is quite different when we come to illicit ATS production. We know this because of a new research initiative – focusing exclusively on ATS production, trafficking and consumption which – I am proud to say – is based out of our Regional Centre in Bangkok. This is an initiative which is supported by five Governments – three of whom are represented in our Seminar here today. These are the Republic of Korea, Thailand and our hosts, the Government of Japan. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Member States for their vision in contributing to this important research initiative.

This research has culminated in UNODC's very first Regional Report on ATS Patterns and Trends in East and SE Asia. The report was released only a few days ago on 26 November in

Bangkok. It is based on information supplied by 15 of our Member States,² including all of the Governments attending this Seminar as participants.

But first, please allow me to take you back in time to the middle of 2009. When we launched our *World Drug Report* in June, what we knew was this. Firstly, that the world's number of ATS users exceeded the combined number of heroin and cocaine users. Second, we knew that East and SE Asia accounted for just under half of the world's total number of ATS users. And thirdly we knew that our region accounted for just over half of the world's methamphetamine seizures.

Our new regional report adds immensely to this knowledge. I have brought hard copies of our new ATS report from Bangkok for each country attending this seminar. You will find them among your materials. Here are some of the highlights of what we now know, based on data we received for 2008 and even the first few months of 2009.

First, the number of countries reporting **methamphetamine** in either pill or crystalline form as their primary drug of use, has remained largely the same over the past four years. However, methamphetamine has rapidly become more prominent in some countries which now rank it as the second most common drug after

² The findings of the report are based on primary information submitted by the drug control agencies and designated institutions in **15 countries** through various mechanisms under UNODC's SMART programme. In addition to SMART's online information networks such as DAINAP, the information for this report was also supplemented with official government documents and secondary research.

cannabis or heroin. Not all countries report disaggregated treatment data according to drug type or demographics. But for those countries that do, methamphetamine treatment admissions have risen by double – from just over 26,000 in 2004 to nearly 50,000 admissions in 2007.

In our region, **methamphetamine pill seizures** are also up. Compared with a tally of 25 million pills seized in 2007, the figure for 2008 is 31 million pills. During the same one-year period, crystalline methamphetamine seizures increased, from 7.3 tons to 8.3 tons.

An increasing number of **clandestine** synthetic drug manufacturing facilities are being detected and dismantled in East and SE Asia. During the past five years we have also seen an increase in the average size and sophistication of the clan labs as more of them tend to resemble larger, industrial-size operations. China – for example – reports the largest number of ATS operations dismantled in our region. And the trend is increasing. In the year 2005, Chinese authorities reported 37 laboratories seized in 2005. One year later, the figure had risen to 53. The next year – 2007 – they reported 75. In 2008, a total of 244 clandestine operations were closed down. And although data was not disaggregated for 2008, it is likely that at least a half of these were related to ATS.

In order to see how much the illicit drug market in E/SE Asia has changed in the past 5 years, let's compare all this with what is happening in the **heroin market**. Heroin has been reported as the

primary drug of use for the past five years in China, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Viet Nam. However, among these countries, only Singapore and Viet Nam report it to be on an increasing trajectory in 2008. Overall, countries with a long history of heroin use over the past decade, such as China, Malaysia and Myanmar have reported a declining trend.³

Our results also point to several emerging threats throughout the region.

- First of all, there are indications of increasing demand for methamphetamine in **Thailand** which will likely have worrisome implications for neighbouring countries. The most obvious implication is of increased trafficking and the risk of clandestine laboratory operations either being established or increasing in border areas of Lao PDR and Cambodia.
- Second, we are worried that **Viet Nam** may emerge as a vulnerable market, as methamphetamine manufacturers seek to diversify away from their reliance on the Thai market. The basis of our concerns is detailed in the report.
- Third, the dynamic situation in **Myanmar** in 2009 may well serve as a push factor for illicit drugs and relocation of clandestine manufacturing sites across that country's borders.

³ China, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam account for the vast majority of the regional heroin seizures. As a result of these declining seizures over the past five years the region's overall seizures of heroin in the past 5 years has declined. Declining seizures are particularly evident for China which reported 10.8 tons seized in 2004 with progressively lower seizures in the ensuing years. In 2008, they reported only 4.3 tons of heroin seized.

- Fourth, although methamphetamine – in pill form – remains the dominant form of ATS in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, the availability of **crystalline methamphetamine** (with its considerably higher purity) is likely to expand with a subsequent increase in use, and – very alarmingly – a higher risk of injecting drug use.
- Fifthly, the scale of ATS manufacturing in **Indonesia** is already large and this Member State – we believe – is at risk of potentially displacing Europe as the major supply source for ecstasy in the region.
- Sixth, we worry that **Malaysia** is at a high risk of becoming a major consumer market for ATS since large amounts are trafficked into the country in addition to large-scale domestic manufacturing. As we have seen countless times over history, supply creates its own demand.
- Point number seven. Something which should be of concern to all in this room. Economic development is accelerating across the region. This is leading to new **infrastructure and trade initiatives**. While – in general – this is a good thing and will improve the quality of goods which we can purchase, will make them more affordable and will increase speed with which they reach us, there will be negative side effects of all this growth. More people will be on the move. So will traffic and containerized cargo. And this will provide opportunities for traffickers to exploit. Border inspection capacity is at risk of being overwhelmed. In this and so many other areas we must therefore improve our intelligence-led profiling in order to deny traffickers – not only of drugs and precursors, but of

This is the picture on illicit drug trends which I would like to leave you with.

Overall, although we are encouraged that countries in the region are trying hard to tackle the emerging ATS situation, we see our Member States having different capacities to monitor and respond to the threat.

This brings me directly to the second part of my presentation – the response at sea and at ports. The question I would like to pose today is this. What can be done to improve the effectiveness of our response, especially by those officers – such as yourselves – who are accountable for maritime law enforcement?

THE RESPONSE WE REQUIRE

In my view, when we compare criminal operations on the sea with those on land or in the air, there are simply enormous opportunities to disguise illegal activity.

Ships can be out of surveillance range for considerable periods of time. Small ship movements are often unregulated. The complexities of cargo management and security processes can also be used to conceal illicit activity. The costs of interdicting and

searching ships – such as large container carrying vessels or bulk carriers – can also be very high.⁴

From UNCTAD's 2008 Review of Maritime Transport we learn that more than 80% of world trade is conducted by sea. Of this, two-thirds is dry cargo – either bulk, break-bulk, or containerized. And it is this large volume of dry cargo which presents abundant opportunities for hiding criminal activity.⁵

Maritime trafficking, as we know, involves two distinct modes:

- traffick in containers, and
- traffick in vessels which are used to hide drugs

In the former case, the owner, captain and crew of the vessels are generally not aware of the trafficking. In the latter case, they actively participate in it.

Countermeasures for these two types of trafficking differ. In the case of vessels carrying containers, law enforcement measures must almost always be undertaken in ports. For it is nearly impossible to search a ship transporting containers on the high seas. Stopping and searching a vessel on the high seas is only effective for pleasure and fishing boats – or for cargo vessels and only if you have good intelligence.

⁴ Such costs are calculated in terms of time, delays, the facilities and resources which we need to deploy for interdiction and the consequential effects all of this will have on trade.

⁵ UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2008, Chapter 1.
<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=10745&intItemID=4659&lang=1&mode=to>

In terms of the remainder of my address, I would like to consider interdiction at ports before moving on to examine various aspects of interdiction on the high seas.

CONTAINER INTERDICTION

According to information from the World Customs Organization, during the year 2006, there were approximately 420 million container movements across the planet. Much of this was done by sea. Of this total, fewer than 2 per cent were inspected in any manner whatsoever. The WCO projects that the number of container movements will leap to 450 million by the year 2012. You can see the problem.

But there are solutions. And – to turn to the central theme of my address today – these solutions have to be based on inter-country cooperation to permit proper intelligence-sharing, effective profiling and sound enforcement, culminating in the effective use of the judicial process to dismantle transnational organized crime groups.

Please allow me to start by telling you a little about what UNODC is doing to counter container trafficking. Our work in this area comes mainly under our joint **UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme** – or CCP for short. This programme has been in operation since 2005.

The CCP's main visible result on the ground has been to establish inter-agency units in various ports to improve communications and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and other

stakeholders operating in container ports. In some countries, there are as many as 7 agencies work together in the CCP container profiling unit. The units profile high-risk containers for subsequent search and – if required – enforcement action. All countries participating in the CCP have access to a common information-sharing system called **ContainerComm**. This system shares information both regionally and internationally.

To date, the results which can be attributed to the CCP (and the use of ContainerComm) have been – I think – quite impressive.

- More than 30 metric tons of cocaine seized (in Ecuador and Ghana)
- Approximately 15 metric tons of cannabis resin seized (in Pakistan)
- Approximately 150 kg heroin seized (based upon information from Pakistan sent to China and Sri Lanka)
- 76 metric tons of precursor chemicals seized (in Ecuador and Pakistan)

The programme is currently not operational in our region, but [...some governments have...] expressed an interest in having the system installed.

Let me now turn to interdiction at sea.

INTERDICTION AT SEA

As everyone in the room today knows, there are certain basic realities to interdiction at sea. First, no single nation enjoys jurisdiction over the high seas.⁶ For this reason, the law of the sea gives jurisdiction over any non-government vessel to the flag state of that vessel. Alternatively, if the vessel is un-flagged, any nation's warship or coastguard vessel may exercise enforcement jurisdiction on the basis of what Article 17 calls "reasonable grounds to suspect".

However, while in theory Article 17 of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances provides an effective basis for the interdiction of narcotics at sea,⁷ in practice its effectiveness can be compromised in three principal ways.

⁶ For the purposes of law enforcement at sea, the High Seas are the seas beyond the territorial seas of a state (generally beyond 12 nautical miles) – see UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, Art 87 read with Art 58(2).

⁷ Under article 17 of the 1988 United Nations Convention, parties are required to "cooperate to the fullest extent possible to suppress illicit traffic by sea, in conformity with the international law of the sea". This mandate is consistent with article 108 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, which requires States to "cooperate in the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances engaged in by ships on the high seas contrary to international conventions." Essentially, Article 17 expands upon the obligation under article 108 of the Convention on the Law of the Sea to cooperate, through the establishment of a framework within which third party States suspecting trafficking activity may seek the authorization of the flag State to undertake interdiction efforts of its vessels located in maritime zones beyond the territorial sea. Specifically, a framework has been established through which third party States suspecting trafficking activity may seek the authorization of the flag State to undertake interdiction efforts. Unlike paragraph 2 of article 108 of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, Article 17 also foresees that cooperation may be requested with respect to the interdiction of vessels without nationality. Nevertheless, the greater part of Article 17 is devoted to setting forth procedures and practices to facilitate law enforcement action by one State against the vessel of another State beyond the limits of the territorial sea.

First, many of the largest flag states⁸ have no naval presence beyond their own territorial waters. They are therefore unable to exercise any meaningful enforcement jurisdiction over vessels which are flying their flag and which may also be carrying out illegal activities.

Second, again in the case of flagged vessels, those states whose flags have tended to be most used for illegal activity are also the ones which have the largest ship registries. Many such flag states do not have effective systems for receiving, considering and granting applications from other countries to take enforcement action on ships registered to them. Thus, when the navies or coastguards of other states seek to exercise jurisdiction on the basis of authorization from the flag state, there is no response. Or there is no response *in time*.

The third situation relates to un-flagged vessels. In many cases, illegal drug movements by sea (for instance, along the so-called “Hash Highway” in the northern Indian Ocean) takes place in un-flagged vessels. In such circumstances, vessels will often move into territorial seas to thwart the operation of the Vienna Convention knowing both that navies cannot follow – and that the coastal states may not have the no capacity to intervene.

As a result these three realities, the application of the international legal instruments is compromised.

⁸ Including Liberia (with 1,900 registered vessels), Panama (with 5,700) and the Marshall Islands (with 990).

However, the news is not all bad. In fact, if we look across the globe, we see a number of efforts to prevent the maritime trafficking of illicit products (be they drugs, or precursors, or human beings) and smuggling of people.

Today, I would like to refer to two such examples in which UNODC is involved – and then go on to speak about how UNODC works with Member States to strengthen the provisions of Article 17 of the 1988 Convention.

My first example is an initiative driven squarely by UNODC with EC funding. This is our newly-established **Counter-Piracy Programme** – or CPP for short. Although UNODC has worked on maritime issues for many years, the CPP has taken us into a dramatic new area of activity – that is, criminal justice reform in direct support of law enforcement operations at sea.

The CPP recognises that while law enforcement operations at sea will always be the domain of the world's navies and coastguards, those operations can only be effective if two things are also in place. The first is a proper legal framework for maritime enforcement. And the second is the existence of competent criminal justice systems on land to continue the investigative and prosecutorial process.

One of the major frustrations of the world's blue water navies and coastguards⁹ is that their efforts at law enforcement on the sea are

⁹ These are the only organisations to deal with illegal activity on the high seas.

often hampered by the absence of effective international and national mechanisms to support their interdiction efforts.

UNODC's CPP is currently based in Nairobi, because of the proximity to bases from which pirates currently operate in the North West Indian Ocean. It has developed procedures to allow for the handover of pirates from navies to regional states for prosecution.¹⁰ UNODC has also provided support to the police, the prosecutors, the courts and the prisons of regional states to ensure that those arrested on suspicion of piracy receive a fair and efficient trial.

We are seeking to expand the CPP to include support to states wishing to interdict and prosecute individuals and groups who use the sea for wider unlawful purposes.

The second practical example is what is known as the **Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics) – or MAOC-N** – which is based in Lisbon, Portugal.

UNODC has observer status within the MAOC-N and is helping them with a better understanding and implementation of Article 17 of the 1988 Convention.

¹⁰ UNODC acknowledges that there may be no or very little connection between the regional state and the offence committed, and that considerable assistance may be needed to mount the prosecution. In particular, the arresting navy may need to be assured that the criminal justice system in the trying state meets minimum international standards and that trial arrangements are adequate to support the prosecution.

MAOC-N was launched in 2007 by 7 European countries. These are France, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Its aim was to create a European law enforcement agency with military support in order to tackle maritime and air trafficking across the Atlantic Ocean. This agency is working closely with the United States, whose Joint Inter-agency Task Force-South (or JIATF-S) is responsible for enforcement on the other side of the Atlantic. MAOC-N also works with EUROPOL on the European side. The objective is to detect and then intercept targeted vessels and prevent drugs from reaching European markets.

[...]

As I noted, UNODC has observer status within the MAOC-N and we look forward to continued cooperation with them in the implementation of Article 17 of the 1988 Vienna Convention. The above two examples – the Counter Piracy Programme and the MAOC-N – represent UNODC's move away from an almost exclusive emphasis on the legal aspects of maritime security towards a greater degree of engagement in supporting effective law enforcement efforts on maritime security.

However, there is still a major role for UNODC to work in support of Article 17. And this involves legal advice.

In my opinion UNODC can contribute to assisting our Member States improve maritime security by providing legal expertise in what is – in fact – still a highly technical area.

Legal issues – the most crucial one being jurisdiction over crimes committed on board a vessel – must be addressed with great care and professionalism. For example, if the competent authority which issues the authorization for interception or boarding – or which issues the appropriate search warrant – is not properly identified, there can be no serious prospect for conviction of the alleged perpetrators.

Another example. You also know that in many countries, the domestic criminal provisions are different depending on whether we are dealing with civil vessels or government vessels. This has to be taken into consideration in situations where certain corrupt officials have resorted to using government vessels to perpetrate crimes, including trafficking drugs.

Other legal issues relate to the registration of the ship. We are currently reviewing the “flags of convenience” issue. At stake is the matter of who is criminally liable when an offence is committed on board a ship that belongs to one country but is officially registered (or flagged) in a different one for taxation purposes. Who is liable? The country of registration? The country of origin? The crew? Some third party?

Next point. All criminal investigations require the production of admissible evidence before the Courts in order to have a realistic prospect of conviction. In order to meet the strict requirements of criminal law – while nonetheless complying with the human rights principles concerning “due process” and “fair trial” – the evidence

must first be collected. It must be preserved. And finally, it must be produced according to certain standards stipulated in whichever rules of criminal procedure happen to be in force. We all know, for instance, that in many cases the crew will simply decide to throw overboard the trafficked products (normally drugs) when they are about to be arrested. This makes it very difficult – if not impossible – for law enforcement to gather and present the required evidence. In such cases – which are, unfortunately, all-too-frequent – on what legal grounds can the arrested person be charged? What evidence can law enforcement produce to the Court regarding the presence of drugs on board the vessel?

Ironically what sometimes happens is that the intercepting State is itself held accountable if no proof can be attached to the suspect vessel. Often significant fines are levied against the State by criminal organizations.

For this reason, more effective measures such as special investigative techniques have to be implemented. These can be controlled deliveries, for instance. Or law enforcement may have to use electronic intercepts to gather additional evidence.

My point is that the use of such legal tools – as are to be found under the 1988 Convention as well as under the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols – are currently not being optimized. For in the final analysis, the UNTOC – of which UNODC is the guardian – offers powerful provisions on international cooperation to fight most drugs cases. And we must find ways to tap into this power.

At this juncture, it may be worthwhile to speak of the relatively recent efforts to improve the efficacy of **Article 17**. In April 2003, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the United Nations adopted a resolution called “Enhancing international cooperation in combating drug trafficking by sea”. The resolution requests Member States to establish effective channels of communication to pass information among each other as is required under Article 17. It also encourages each Member State to provide UNODC with the latest information so that we can maintain and disseminate a directory of national contact points. Which we do. These days it is online.

In fact, in order to assist our Member States, UNODC has developed a “Practical guide for competent national authorities under Article 17 of the 1988 Convention”. We have also developed the “Maritime Drug Law Enforcement Training Guide”. The Guide is a reference manual for countries seeking to train officers for more effective maritime drug law enforcement. In particular, it provides them with a summary of the legal requirements for international cooperation concerning the boarding and searching of vessels, exercising freedom of navigation in accordance with international law. (Both documents are downloadable from our HQ website.)

Overall, my basic point is this: cooperation can only come from trust. And trust can only be build upon face-to-face meetings. Such as this one. And I again take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Japan for organizing this initiative to bring law

enforcement and legal experts together to share ideas and knowledge on maritime security. I honestly believe that this is the best way to forge a common cause against transnational organized crime groups.

And if we are to be able to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking and piracy cases, we must make a much greater investment in strengthening the capacity of regional criminal justice systems.

Out of a sense of modesty, I have left some of the specific details of what our UNODC Regional Centre in Bangkok is doing to last. This will be brief.

We are making one such investment at the moment. It is in a programme called “**Towards AsiaJust**”. Our “Towards AsiaJust” programme aims to support East Asia and the Pacific to develop a more solid network of judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials to fight transnational organized crime through establishing a transnational organized justice scheme.¹¹

Our work on counternarcotics in the region is also very closely linked to the existing regional arrangements for drug control such as the MOU between the Greater Mekong Countries and

¹¹ The “Towards AsiaJust” programme will focus on supporting the following 4 outcomes: (1) Member states ratify international conventions and instruments on drugs, crime and terrorism; (2) Supporting legislative and regulatory frameworks established; (3) Integrity-based and accountable criminal justice systems established, which also address needs of vulnerable groups; and (4) Improved transnational cooperation on criminal justice matters.

ourselves, the ACCORD Plan of Action involving the ASEAN countries, China and ourselves.

[...]

On precursor chemicals, we are – in concert with the 6 countries of the GMS, planning to roll-out – in 2010 – a new initiative to strengthen the investigative, intelligence and industry-based responses to the trafficking of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished participants, as I move to conclude, let me re-iterate that our Member States can continue to count upon UNODC's support in maritime security:

- through our Container Control Programme;
- through our technical support to MAOC-N,
- through our Counter Piracy Programme, and finally
- through our support to Member States in respect of the provisions of Article 17.

But our efforts are small in comparison with what our Member States – with their vastly greater resources – can do together.

The key is “networking” – the sort of thing which we will be doing at this meeting over the next two days. And I am very much looking forward to hearing from you – during this MADLES conference – about your findings from the operations and investigations you

have conducted. That will tell us more clearly where the threats lie and how we can mount an effective joint response.

As I end my remarks today, I would like to ask that we all remember that East and South-East Asia is home to 3 in every 10 people alive today. We are living in one of the fastest growing regions in the world. As a result of globalization, the countries in the region have also become more interdependent. For this reason, the challenges within any sector - be it governance, development, infrastructure, trade and economy, environment, health or security - of any particular country, will have a ripple effect across the region.

Illicit drugs pose one such challenge. Our communities and our countries are relying on us to mount an effective response. Through our work this week, let us contribute to this important effort.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, I would like to again thank the Japan Coast Guard for their very kind invitation to address you this morning.

I wish this meeting every success and look forward to the active deliberations and proposals for further action, collective or otherwise.

I thank you for your kind attention.